

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Torture/Legal Concern

16 June 1992

COLOMBIA:

Samuel Fernando ROJAS MOTOA, trade union leader

Amnesty International is concerned at the reported torture in military custody of Samuel Fernando Rojas Motoa, a trade union leader.

On 4 June 1992, members of the B-2 intelligence unit from the Colombian army's Ayacucho Battalion, which is based in Manizales, department of Caldas forcibly entered the home of Samuel Rojas after firing shots at the building. The troops presented no search warrant and in the presence of Samuel Rojas' family, blindfolded him and drove away to the military base in Anserma, also in Caldas department.

At Anserma military base Samuel Rojas was reportedly subjected to torture, including beatings to the chest and abdomen, mock execution and threats against his life. Samuel Rojas was later transferred to San Mateo Battalion in Pereira, in neighbouring Risaralda department. There he was again tortured during interrogation and received death threats. He was not allowed to sleep until his transfer to the Judicial prison, Cárcel del Distrito Judicial, in Pereira and brought before a public order court on charges of belonging to the armed opposition group People's Liberation Army, Ejército Popular de Liberación. Samuel Rojas remains in detention. The torture has been denounced to the Procurator (Procurador) in Pereira.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Samuel Rojas is a member of the Municipal Workers' Union for Cartago, department of Valle del Cauca, Sindicato de Trabajadores del Municipio de Cartago, and is a board member of the Valle Department Trade Union Confederation, Central Unitaria de Trabajadores, CUT. In 1987, when Samuel Rojas was President of the union, he received death threats in the name of a paramilitary group calling itself "Resplendent Cartago", "Cartago Resplandeciente". The threats took the form of an invitation to his own funeral mass (sufragio) and warned him that unless he left Cartago he would be killed.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the reported torture in military custody of Samuel Fernando Rojas Motoa and requesting an immediate, independent inquiry (the results of which should be made public) in order to bring to justice those responsible;
- requesting that he receive all necessary medical attention as a result of the torture and that adequate measures be taken to safeguard against further torture and ill-treatment;

- requesting information about Samuel Rojas' current legal situation and urging that statements which may have been extracted under torture not be accepted as evidence against him;

- requesting the authorities to issue clear public instructions to all members of the military and security forces that torture of detainees is a violation of human rights and that those found to be responsible for such abuses will be brought to justice.

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APPEALS TO:

1) President of Colombia

Señor Presidente César Gaviria Trujillo
Presidente de la República
Palacio de Nariño
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: President Gaviria, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 44281 PALP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 286 3066; + 57 1 286 7324; + 57 1 287 7937

[Salutation: Excelentísimo Sr. Presidente / Dear President Gaviria]

2) Comandante

Batallón Ayacucho
Manizales
Caldas, Colombia

Telegrams: Comandante Batallón Ayacucho, Manizales, Caldas, Colombia

[Salutation: Sr. Comandante / Dear Sir]

3) Procurator General:

Dr. Carlos Gustavo Arrieta Padilla
Procurador General de la Nación
Procuraduría General
Edificio Banco Ganadero
Carrera 5, No. 15-80
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Procurador General Arrieta, Bogotá, Colombia

Telexes: 41224 PRGEN CO; 41213 PGNDP CO

Faxes: + 57 1 284 0472

[Salutation: Sr. Procurador de la Nación / Dear Dr. Arrieta]

4) Minister of Justice

Dr. Fernando Carrillo Flórez
Ministro de Justicia
Ministerio de Justicia
Calle 26, No. 27-48
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

Telegrams: Ministro de Justicia, Santa Fe de Bogota, Colombia

[Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister]

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Human Rights organization

Señores
CSPP
Apartado Aéreo 22803
Santa Fe de Bogotá, Colombia

and to diplomatic representatives of Colombia in your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 28 July 1992.